

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4228

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 4829

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, GT

SUBJECT: SHIPPING AND CIVIL AVIATION PROBLEMS

REF: (A) GUATEMALA 4613, (B) STATE 185494

1. AMBASSADOR, AT HIS REQUEST, CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA ORANETES MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 4 TO DISCUSS DELTA/FLOMERCA SHIPPING AND PANAM/AVIATECA AVIATION ROBLEMS.

2. AMBASSADOR SAID U.S. GOVERNMENT REGARDS THESE TWO PROBLEMS AS SERIOUS AND PRESSING. THEY ARE BEING RAISED ON A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT LEVEL BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL POLICY QUESTIONS INVOLVED. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE WAS APPROACHING THE FOREIGN MINISTER ORALLY RATHER THAN WITH A WRITTEN COMMUNICATION IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE POSSIBILITIES OF AN AMICABLE AND QUITABLE SOLUTION TO BOTH PROBLEMS. HE WISHED TO OFFER HIS COOPERATION TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND IN TURN SOLICITED THE COOPERATION OF THE MINISTER IN A JOINT EFFORT TO RESOLVE THESE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO OR FRICTIONS IN THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND THE U.S. THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THIS APPROACH.

3. THE DISCUSSION THEN FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE OUTLINE SET FORTH IN
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PARAGRAPHS 2 OF REFTEL A. DURING HIS EXPOSITION THE AMBASSADOR

DREW UPON THE SUBSTANCE OF REFTTEL B.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA INDICATED HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE DETAILS OF THE TWO PROBLEMS BUT TOOK NOTES THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION. HE EXPRESSED HIS FULL AGREEMENT THAT AN AMICABLE, EQUITABLE AND EARLY SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE SOUGHT TO BOTH THE DELTA/FLOMERCA SHIPPING AND THE PANAM/AVIATECA AVIATION PROBLEMS. HE SAID HE WOULD STUDY THE MATTER AND NOTIFY THE AMBASSADOR OF THE NAMES OF THE APPROPRIATE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH WHOM EMBASSY OFFICERS MIGHT FOLLOW UP WITH DETAILS. HE WOULD ALSO CONSULT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND INFORM THE AMBASSADOR AS TO THE GOG'S RECEPTIVITY TO A VISIT OF A U.S. CIVIL AVIATION TEAM TO GUATEMALA TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATING A BILATERAL CIVIL AVIATION AGREEMENT.

5. REGARDING PANAM'S DIFFICULTIES, THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT, WHILE IT WAS NOT A CONDITION FOR THE VISIT OF THE CIVIL AVIATION TEAM, IT WOULD GREATLY IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE FOR POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS AND BE MUCH APPRECIATED IF THE ORDER WITHDRAWING PANAM'S FIFTH FREEDOM RIGHTS ON THE GUATEMALA-SAN SALVADOR ROUTE TO BE EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 9 WOULD BE SUSPENDED. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THIS POSSIBILITY.

6. COMMENT: THE DISCUSSION WAS CARRIED ON IN A LOW-KEY, EXTREMELY FRANK AND FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT A NUMBER OF MATTERS WERE TOUCHED UPON WHICH COULD BE EXPECTED TO BE UNPALATABLE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, MOLINA APPEARED UNRUFFLED AND RECEPTIVE THROUGHOUT. THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING AT THIS LEVEL, HOWEVER, AND MOLINA UNDOUBTEDLY WILL ENCOUNTER A STRONG REACTION FROM SOME OF HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES. THE BEGINNING HAS BEEN PROPITIOUS, NEVERTHELESS, AND WE BELIEVE A LOW-KEY AND FRIENDLY, ALBEIT OFFICIAL APPROACH HAS CREATED A GOOD ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TO SEEK SOLUTIONS TO THE TWO PROBLEMS. MELOY

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